Reviewer's report

Title: Psychiatric Rating Scales In Urdu: A Systematic Review

Version: 3 Date: 8 October 2007

Reviewer: Kamaldeep Bhui

Reviewer's report:

1. The quality rating of the paper is still not sufficiently clear. Was there a scoring system or was this purely a judgement? How was the quality rating used in the analysis of the findings? There appears not be a scoring system. It is difficult to know how these were rated and used. As you know, quality ratings is an important part of a systematic review process and does bear upon the weighting given to different studies within the overall review.

2. The term “indigenous” is used now by the authors This refers to Outcome measures developed in Pakistan by psychiatric professionals. The term indigenous is also used to reflect the development of psychiatric measures based on the Emic narrative of individuals where they associate their personal distress with particular complaints and symptoms. A distinction needs to be made. The authors are essentially still talking about etic measures, albeit they have been developed in Pakistan in Urdu. They might also raise questions about how these are likely to be very similar to etic instruments all over the world given that psychiatric symptomology and diagnosis is intended to be unified across different World sites. Does culture enter into these diagnostic algorithms in a silent way? This would be an important discussion point.

3. The criteria for selection of papers need to be made explicit and the selection of papers might better be represented in a flow chart. How many experts were actually consulted and how many papers were derived from those experts? This all needs to be clearly set out.

4. Two of the papers were extracted by a different author. Was there any cross checking to ensure inter-rater reliability. It is important to have ensured this.
5. The authors may want to consider the distinctions between language and culture in the adaptation of instruments. In particular, I refer to two previous publications of mine, one published in Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology in 2000, vol 35, 6, p248: Cross cultural validity of the Anristar depression inventory and the General Health Questionnaire. This was primarily a study of Punjabi versus English measures and some of the issues about cross cultural validity are addressed within this. A further publication in the International Journal of Social Psychiatry, again demonstrated the differences and prevalence if Emic and etic measures. The authors might wish to refer to these to strength their arguments and to broaden the discussion particularly on gold standards.

6. Paragraph 3 on the penultimate page before the conclusion, beginning “When looking for similar reviews (apologies, page is not numbered) might best be moved to the introduction to the paper.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'